

REMARKS

Claims 14 – 32 were previously pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 14, 19, 20, 25 and 29 are currently amended, new claims 33 and 34 have been added, and claims 15 – 18, 21 – 24, 26 – 28 and 30 – 32 remain unchanged.

Claims 14 – 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner states that in claim 14, lines 7 – 8, “at least two plug elements formed on at least one of said middle piece and said end pieces” renders the claim inoperable since the embodiment would include objects located at the same location as that of the receiving element, as stated in lines 5 – 6 of the claim. With respect to lines 9 – 10, the Examiner states that it cannot be understood how a plurality of “plug elements” is inserted into a singular receiving element, and further pointed out similar errors in claims 25 and 29.

With respect to claim 18, lines 1 – 2, the Examiner states that “at least one of said receiving elements” is vague and indefinite, since none of the preceding claims define a plurality of elements. Still further, the Examiner also states that in claims 19 – 20, it is not clear which of the plug elements the “plug element” is referring to.

In order to address these objections, it is noted that the claims have been amended. More specifically, claim 14 is now revised to refer to “receiving elements” corresponding in number to at least two plug elements. In claim 19, each receiving element and a plug element corresponding thereto are now recited as being substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the middle piece. In claim 20, the plug element is recited as including a base surrounded by a circumferential projection, which forms a stop for a receiving element corresponding thereto.

Claim 25 has been amended in a manner similar to claim 14, as has claim 29. Accordingly, through these amendments it is believed sufficient reasons have been given to enable the Examiner to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections. Nonetheless, should the Examiner still have any questions or suggestions necessary to resolve any outstanding

issues, he is courteously requested to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

In addition to the aforementioned rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, claims 14 – 32 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,144,718 to Ozawa (“Ozawa”). In addition, the Examiner has noted that a process for a product made in a product claim (e.g. extruded, injection molded scoring) is given no patentable weight.

Independent claim 14 recites a door handle for mounting on a refrigeration furniture door. The door handle recited therein is a simple but effective construction made up of an elongated middle piece and two end pieces. Receiving elements are formed on either one of the end pieces or the middle piece, with at least two plug elements corresponding to the receiving elements formed on one of the middle piece or the end pieces. The end pieces are fixed to the middle piece by the plug elements being inserted into the receiving elements on opposite ends of the middle piece, thereby extending the middle piece in the longitudinal direction with the receiving elements having substantially continuous peripheral walls over their entire length.

Claim 25 recites in independent claim form an assembly kit for a door handle in a manner substantially similar to claim 14. Claim 19 recites a method for producing a door handle in which the elements are formed to result in the individual components of claims 14 and 25, with a final step of fixing the end pieces to the middle piece by inserting the plug elements to attach the end pieces to the middle piece, thereby extending the middle piece in the longitudinal direction and forming the receiving elements with substantially continuous peripheral walls over their entire length.

New claim 33 recites a door handle similar to the door handle of claim 14. In addition to the aforementioned elements, claim 33 further recites that the end pieces be of a size wherein when pressed into a corresponding receiving element, a force-locking connection is formed. The plug elements further include a circumferential projection of smaller cross-sectional area than the remainder of the plug elements, such that when the

middle piece and end pieces are joined there is no discontinuity between the end pieces and the middle pieces.

Ozawa, in contrast, recites a much more complex arrangement of elements to result in a door handle. More specifically, the door handle of Ozawa comprises a hollow pull member and a pair of fittings 8, 9 to be coupled with opposite ends of the pull member 7 (column 2, lines 12 – 16). The fittings 8, 9 include a hollow block and a projection extending from the hollow block integrally therewith. The projection has a base and an end which is slightly thinner than the base, with the end of the projection having grooves. An elastic tubular spacer of synthetic resin is attached to and around the end of the projection and includes wedges so that the spacer can be partially deformed inwardly by the wedges into the grooves when the fitting is connected to the hollow pull member (column 2, lines 21 – 36).

As may be appreciated, this is a much more complex arrangement than the elements recited in Applicant's claims. More specifically, Ozawa does not teach or suggest in an obvious manner the arrangement of claims 14, 25 and 29, and the claims dependent therefrom.

Yet still further, the subject matter as now defined in new claims 33 and 34 is clearly not anticipated by or suggested by Ozawa, particularly as it relates to the sizing of the plug elements, and the circumferential projection as now further recited in independent claim 33, as well as the scoring for efficiently locking the plug element as recited in claim 34.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 14 – 34 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig J. Loest', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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